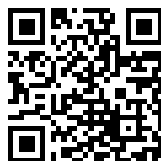

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12

THE

UNITY OF GOVERNMENT

IN THE

CHURCH OF CHRIST,

CONSIDERED IN REFERENCE TO

THE GORHAM CONTROVERSY.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED BY

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PRICE SIXPENCE.

AZ 928

LONDON:
BURNS AND LAMBERT.
LIVERPOOL: ROCKLIFF AND SON, 50, CASTLE-STREET.

MDCCCL.

A SERMON.

AND THERE SHALL BE ONE FOLD AND ONE SHEPHERD.

St. John, c. x, v. 16.

BELOVED CHRISTIANS,

THE first Sacrament of the Christian faith has lately received from the Established Church the same treatment, which the august Founder of that faith experienced at the hands of the Jewish Synagogue. When the strongest party of the Jews had doomed our Saviour to death, unable to execute the sentence which they had passed, they had recourse to the lay-tribunal of Pilate : who, finding him guiltless, referred him to the lay-tribunal of Herod : and King Herod, without discovering any more ground for censure, treated him as a fool and sent him back in mockery to Pilate : who, through fear of offending the Jews, delivered him up to their will, washing his hands the while, and saying, *I am innocent of the blood of this man.* Thus in the State-church, where there have long been two parties, the Low-church, which is the more numerous party, has sought to destroy “Baptismal Regeneration,” which, as an article

of faith, the High-church has striven to preserve. The question has at length been brought to issue. Having no power to carry into execution the sentence which they had decreed, the adherents of the Low-church appealed first to the lay-tribunal of the Court of Arches: but "Baptismal Regeneration" being here acquitted of blame, they made their next appeal to the Queen's Council, the lay-head of the State-church; which, declaring the subject to be an open question, treated the great article of faith as a thing of no worth, dismissed it, as if in derision, from its court, and delivered it up to the will of the populace, shouting like the Jews, "Crucifigatur."

In fact, it has already ceased to be an article of faith in the Established Church of England. Individuals here and there may continue for a time to believe it; but the Church itself disowns it, and refuses henceforth to make it a condition of communion. For it is vain to say, that the Queen's Council, from which the decree has emanated, is nothing more than a lay-tribunal. Though in its members, like the Court of Arches, it be a lay tribunal, yet, by virtue of its office, it is as much ecclesiastical as the other: at all events, it is the highest authority, which the Anglican church knows, and the one, which she has always been obliged to acknowledge. It is in fact the authority which at first gave her birth, and which has since nourished, supported and preserved her. She owes her very being and existence to the state: and surely that authority, which framed the Thirty-nine Articles and forced them on the English church, does not exceed

the limits of its power, when it changes and modifies the work of its own hands. It is now evident to all, that the Anglican church is the bond-slave of the state. Yet it is not to-day that she begins to be a slave. Now indeed, in striving to be free, she feels the fetters which bind her : now, in rousing herself from supineness, she makes the clank of her chains ring loudly through the land. But she became a slave from the moment, when, taking the Thirty-nine Articles as her creed from the sovereign of the land and acknowledging him as her head, she renounced the Catholic faith, denied the supremacy of St. Peter's See, and withdrew from **THE ONE FOLD OF THE ONE SHEPHERD.**

This state of bondage must necessarily be the condition of every church which acknowledges the sovereign of the state as its head. It is the condition of the several state-churches of Denmark, Prussia, Holland, Sweden, Norway and Russia. Each church, established by the sovereign, lives at his beck and varies according to his will : and though each may claim the gospel as its rule, yet as the gospel can always be interpreted to suit the humour and caprice of the sovereign, all these churches, governed each by a distinct and separate head, may become, on various points of belief, totally opposite to each other ; without sympathy of feeling, or union of heart, or harmony of sentiment ; without bond or tie to hold them together ; without a common point of support to which they can look in distress, and presenting the reverse-picture of the Church, which Jesus Christ came from heaven to establish. For he came to give

to all mankind a Church which should be strictly ONE : one in Faith and one in Government. *There shall be one fold and one shepherd. One body and one spirit : one hope of your calling : one Lord, one faith, one baptism.* Eph. c. iv.

It should be one in Faith : for one faith is sufficient to answer all the purposes, for which religion has been revealed : viz. to unfold to men, endowed with the same understanding, the same mysteries of God's nature ; to explain to men, possessed of the same passions and dispositions of heart, the same precepts of morality ; to impart to men, having all but one end, the same motives of virtue ; and to provide men, assailed by the same foes, with the same weapons of defence. Religion in the moral may be compared to the sun in the physical world. For as one sun is sufficient to illumine all the nations of the earth : as it alone, by the genial warmth which it diffuses, imparts every where fertility to the watered soil, and makes it productive in every kind and variety of vegetation ; as it suffices to spread beauty and colour over every object in nature, and gives infinite charms to what would otherwise be dreary, obscure, and unsightly ; as these effects are produced by one sun in every part of the earth, (to say nothing of other planets, to which also they may be communicated), so similar results of equal diversity and extent, may, throughout the moral world, proceed from one divinely established religion ; which shall both illumine the minds and warm the hearts of men ; which shall cause the soul, watered by the dews of heaven, to shoot forth an endless variety of noble and heroic deeds ; which,

chasing before it the noxious vapours of ignorance and doubt, shall discover what was before unseen, illustrate what was obscure, beautify what seemed terrific, open the secret springs of God's ways to our view, and unfold the beauty, proportion and symmetry, which pervade the whole system of divine Providence. The Great Author of nature in his wisdom knows how to produce an infinite variety of contrary effects by the operation of a single cause, and rejects every instrument which is unnecessary in the execution of his grand designs: and as he would not give two suns to rule the universe, because one, under his directing hand, could produce the multiplied different effects of a thousand suns, so he would not reveal two religions; because he was able to establish one single religion, which should be as well adapted to the whole human race, as if each nation or individual had a religion of its own.

In fact, we know that Jesus Christ revealed but one faith or religion, which he required all men to believe to the end of time. *One Lord, one faith, one baptism.* But in order that the various nations of the earth, who should believe this faith, might be united into one church and moulded into one body, it was necessary that one head should be appointed to direct and govern the whole. *And there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.* For as an army, composed of many battalions, is one, by reason of the supreme authority of the captain who leads it, and as a kingdom, consisting of various provinces, is one, by virtue of the power concentrated in the sovereign, who holds the helm of the state, so the church of Christ,

which embraces all nations, that it may be but one fold, must be under the guidance of one shepherd—that it may form but one body, must be under the direction of one head: not an invisible shepherd or head, as Christ is now, but a shepherd—visible as the sheep whom he leads, and a head—visible as the members which it directs; otherwise the principle, on which Christ would have constructed his church, would be in opposition to the law, which he has established for all human societies.

To verify his words, that there should be *one fold and one shepherd*, did our Saviour then, before he quitted the earth, appoint a visible head, who should govern his church with supreme and universal jurisdiction to the end of time? Hearken unto the voice of him, who speaks what he pleaseth, and who doth what he speaks. Having demanded of the Apostles, whom they took him to be, and received from St. Peter that solemn profession of his belief, “*Thou art Christ the Son of the living God,*” our Saviour turned to him and thus addressed him: *Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona:—and I say to thee that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven.* Matt. c. xvi, v. 17. Here, in presence of the whole body of the Apostles, our Saviour, singling out St. Peter, named him the rock, on which he should build his everlasting Church, and designated him as the chief governor, whom he

meant to intrust with the keys of the Eternal city and empower to open and shut its gates. St. Peter, therefore, under this two-fold figure, is emphatically declared head of the Apostolic College, and invested with supreme jurisdiction over the whole church. I know that the other apostles were foundation-stones of the church, but not the rock on which it was built. I know that to them were intrusted the keys of the kingdom of heaven, but with subjection to the supreme authority of St. Peter. In vain is it said, that the words were addressed to the other apostles, as well as to St. Peter. The context does not admit of such a construction, and every word in the passage forbids it. *Blessed art THOU Simon Bar-Jona* : (not the rest of the apostles) : *and I say to THEE*, (not to the others), *that THOU art Cephas or πέτρος or Rock* : *and to THEE I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven* : *and whatsoever THOU shalt bind, &c.* No ! he alone is meant, who is addressed by name, *Simon Bar-Jona* : he alone is constituted the foundation-rock whose name is changed into another signifying a rock : he alone is intrusted with a singular prerogative, who alone had merited it by his solemn profession of belief. If scriptural authority be demanded in support of the catholic dogma of the supremacy of St. Peter's See, can anything be more clear, evident, convincing, undeniable, than the passage just adduced ?

However, there is another, in St. John c. xxi, of equal clearness and strength. It is the passage, in which Christ fulfilled the promise, made to St. Peter in the above cited text, of constituting him head of

the Church. When, after his resurrection, he beheld his disciples around him, addressing himself to St. Peter, he asked him ; “ *Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these ?* ” Feeling the most ardent love for his divine master, but too humble to think that his love, however ardent, could surpass that of his brethren, he simply replied, “ *Lord thou knowest that I love thee.* ” Jesus then said to him, “ *feed my lambs.* ” He then saith to him again, “ *Simon, son of John, lovest thou me ?* ” St. Peter making the same reply, he again received from his Lord the same commission : “ *Feed my lambs.* ” Hearing the same question put to him for the third time, “ *lovest thou me,* ” St. Peter was grieved and replied ; “ *Lord, thou knowest all things ; thou knowest that I love thee.* ” Jesus Christ then said, “ **FEED MY SHEEP.** ” The very expression, “ *Simon, son of John lovest thou me more than these,* ” not only distinguishes St. Peter from the rest of the apostles, not only singles him out as the sole object of our Lord’s address to the exclusion of the others, but imports, that some singular privilege was about to be granted to him, which was not to be communicated to the rest. What is this privilege ? The charge to watch over and feed, not only the lambs, but the sheep who suckle them ; to feed not only the laity, but the priests and bishops of the church ; to superintend the whole flock of Christ ; so that there might be but **ONE FOLD AND ONE SHEPHERD.** Though the other apostles were undoubtedly pastors—and pastors endowed with the same supernatural wisdom, the same power of working miracles, the same charge of preaching the gospel as St. Peter—yet, in point of

authority, they were subordinate to the prince of the apostles, as St. Peter is styled by the Fathers. For the words, "*Feed my sheep*," and "*Thou art the rock*," and "*to thee I will give the keys*," are nowhere applied by Jesus Christ to the body of his apostles ; whereas, on two most solemn occasions, in presence of all his disciples, in the most marked and emphatic manner, are they addressed to St. Peter. Wherefore St. Peter is the one shepherd of the one fold ; the supreme head of Christ's mystical body ; the rock on which his church is built : and as the church, which will abide for ever, can endure no longer than the rock whereon it stands, it is clear that St. Peter's supremacy must abide for ever in those who succeed him in his office and his See : an authority, which, if it was necessary in the infancy of the church and in the life-time of the apostles, became infinitely more so after their death, when the church had expanded to the full perfection of its manhood.

For why, let me ask, did Jesus Christ appoint one shepherd to govern his fold ? It was, that his fold might be ONE : it was for the sake of UNITY ; which, combined with catholicity, is an infallible mark of his church. *It was*, says St. Jerome, *that a head being appointed, the occasion of schism might be removed*. The reason acquires weight in proportion to the extent and duration of the church. St. Peter then lives in his successors ; and the Roman Pontiff, who sits in St. Peter's chair, is now the one shepherd of the one fold : the rock, on which the church of Christ is built : the head, which directs, governs and commands the members of Christ's mystical body : and

consequently, the sheep, who hear not the voice of the shepherd, belong not to the one fold of Christ; the stones, which have fallen from the rock, belong not to the holy temple of Christ; and the members, which refuse to obey the commands of the head, belong not to the spiritual body of Christ: limbs indeed they are, but senseless, dead, corrupted limbs, cut off from the living body, and reserved for everlasting punishment. Thus the Roman Pontiff is the centre of union, to which all the faithful must tend, meeting in unity of faith and love. It is by virtue of this high prerogative, with which our Saviour has invested him, that the Church of Christ continues to be ONE, and that it stands a consistent, uniform, compact and indissolubly united body. If this centre of union were destroyed—which cannot be, since it is upheld by the promises of Christ—there would be as many distinct churches as nations in the world, each independent of the other, and *the one fold of the one shepherd* would cease to exist. The oneness of the fold, or the unity of the church, is preserved by the unity of its government, the supremacy of the Roman See, which is the bond of communion that unites all its members together.

For Jesus Christ having constituted St. Peter, and each of his successors in the Roman See, the visible and universal head of the Church, it is obvious, that each particular church ought to be united to that head in the communion of faith and the bond of peace. This communion with the head being established, there results a necessary communion among the particular churches themselves: and hence is formed

one single universal church, which, though spread over the whole face of the globe, remains always strictly one, by reason of the union kept up with the centre of unity, the See of St. Peter. For as the lines, drawn from the circumference of a circle, converge and meet in the centre, so every particular church, established in any part of the earth, however remote, must tend to the centre of Catholic unity, the chair of St. Peter, the Apostolic See, the Bishop of Rome. Thus it is, that all the faithful of the world, having but one centre, one single head, form but one body and one family: whereof the members are joined together, because they are all united to one head. Thus it is, while all the pastors constitute but one body with the Roman Pontiff, that each of them, in the exercise of his jurisdiction, is so supported by the whole body, as not to be easily despoiled of his liberty and independence, in resisting the powers of hell and defending the sacred deposit of faith. Thus it is, that the received doctrine of Christ is handed down pure and uncorrupted; because, no sooner does error anywhere raise its head, than it is easily stifled by the immediate exertion of the supreme authority, which every bishop is bound to obey. Thus it is, that an easy, ready, and expeditious means is found to arrest at the outset the course of error, to beat down impieties, and check the rank growth of profane novelties. Thus it is, that a simple and easy path of truth is opened to walk in—the path of authority; which, as soon as discovered, dispenses the faithful from the trouble and anxiety of private investigation, and delivers them from all incertitude and doubt; for to

guard that path, the See of St. Peter, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail, stands, like an impregnable fortress, bidding defiance to the spirit of discord or to the inroads of scepticism. Thus it is, that all the faithful repose in the plenitude of peace, in the same faith, in the same system of morals, in the self-same indivisible union of the sheep with the pastors, of the pastors with the bishops, of the bishops with each other—above all, in the union of the sheep, pastors, bishops to the Supreme Pontiff, the successor of St. Peter, the centre of Catholic unity ; thus in fine it is, that the words of Christ are always fulfilled, *“and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.”*

Oh ! who, Beloved Brethren, as he views this church, embracing all nations in her fold and obeying one head throughout all time, can fail to admire the power and wisdom of God, who by blending therein unity and catholicity—which naturally are incompatible—has set the seal of the Godhead on this church, and proclaimed to the world by an infallible mark, that she is his own divine work ! Thus the Church, like the heavens, manifests the glory of the Most High. When God, the author of nature, decreed to form the planetary system, where several spheres, moving at different distances and revolving in perpetual and unchangeable orbits, impart to the heavenly firmament all that we can imagine most grand and beautiful, he availed himself of two simple forces ; one of projection, by which the celestial bodies were impelled forward in a straight line and urged farther and farther each moment from their centre ; the other of gravitation, by which these same

bodies were attracted, each reciprocally towards the other, and all at the same time towards the sun, their common centre : so that under the composition of these two forces, (one force, tending to urge them forward for ever in a straight line, and the other drawing them continually towards their one great centre of attraction), they described elliptical orbits, revolving with astonishing rapidity—the moons of the planets round the planets and the planets themselves at their respective distances round the sun—without ever stopping in their motion or deviating in the least from their course. If, in contemplating this system of nature, we discover so much cause to wonder at the wisdom of God, who, with forces so simple, could give regularity and firmness to this vast machine, how much more justly ought our minds to kindle into admiration, when we reflect, that by forces not less simple, he has communicated order and stability to the wondrous fabric of his church ! For whilst the doctrine of truth is by the Holy Spirit darted through the world, forming in every direction new churches as it flies on the breath of God's heralds, the principle of unity, which he has established, holds and confines every church in the sphere of the hierarchy, by drawing them sweetly to St. Peter's See, the central point to which all gravitate in obedience of faith ; and thus imparts such firmness and compact strength to the whole Ecclesiastical System, as will brave the rudest shock, which it can have to sustain, either from the violence of infidelity, or from the fury of the passions.

Behold ! in the centre beams the Bishop of

Rome, the successor of St. Peter, the vicegerent of Jesus Christ, who is, the true sun of justice ! Around, throughout the world are seen at different distances other lights—the bishops, who have succeeded the other apostles ! Each of these has around him inferior priests, who hear his doctrine and obey his mandates. Whilst the lesser clergy adhere to their respective bishops, the bishops themselves, from the several quarters of the heavens, tend and converge towards the Bishop of Rome, the great sun, from whom (if I may say so) they borrow the light of faith beaming in their orbs : with whom they are in the closest communion of faith and charity : from whom they derive force and energy to check error and quell sedition : whose decisions they implicitly obey, as soon as he passes sentence on the questions referred to his authority. What stability does not this principle of unity give to this noble work of God ? Though heresy, as in the fourth or sixteenth century, should, like some blasting comet, break in upon the order and harmony of the system, and, in its wild career, strike in fearful collision against some shining orb, which holds its place in the hierarchy of the church, the whole framework might quiver and be convulsed ; the fierce shock might reach to the very centre ; but the See of Rome, firm as the Throne of God, because upheld by the infallible promises of God, would stand itself unmoved, and keep, in their proper course secure, all others joined to it in charity and faith. Can there be conceived a more beautiful principle of stability than this law of unity, which

combines in one whole all the members of a universal church? Can there be a brighter mark to show that the Catholic Church, thus bound and governed by the law of unity, is the handiwork of God? Can there be a stronger bulwark to preserve the purity of faith and hand it down safe to the end of time, than this rock-built church, *against which the gates of hell shall not prevail; which is the pillar and the ground of truth; which is the one fold of the one shepherd*; wherein Jesus Christ has promised to *abide with his Holy Spirit to the consummation of the world*? What human understanding could ever have conceived the design of such a church, or, if conceived, what human power could have carried the design into execution? Yes! She shows, in every feature of her strength and comeliness, the mind and hand of the Deity.

Oh! Beloved Brethren, what picture can be imagined more beautiful, more lovely, more glorious, or more sublime, than all the members, which constitute man's great family on earth, believing precisely the same divine truths, keeping the same divine precepts, offering the same sacrifice to their Maker, receiving the same sacraments, meeting together in the same churches—the people united to the priests, the priests to their bishops, the bishops to the supreme visible head who rules under God—the whole being one compact body, animated with one spirit, breathing the same sentiments in different languages, observing the same laws with different national habits, and preserving the bond of love amid the conflicting interests of independent king-

doms! It is the picture of a church, designed by him, who said, "*One fold and one shepherd*," who inspired the words, "*One body and one spirit: one Lord, one faith, one baptism*." It is the picture of a church realized before the sixteenth century; but a picture, which, since that period, the misguided zeal of Reformers has sought and laboured to deface: and, partially, they have succeeded. But cast your eyes on the various jarring sects into which the Reformation has broken Christianity, and ask, whether this state of things has sprung from the God of peace, or from the author of dissension? Ah! The work bears evidently the stamp of human passion!

Amidst these sects is seen, fairest and best, the English Church; who, three hundred years ago, leaving "*the one fold of the one shepherd*," withdrew apart, erected a fold of her own, and chose the monarch of the state for her shepherd. Lo! the wolves have come down on the fold! The scattered sheep give signal of distress! The shepherd in alarm dare not succour his flock! What is to be done? Ye Anglicans, who uphold the truth, blame not your Head! He is the shepherd of your choice. He has the right to dictate to his flock. He has acted at least with earthly prudence. If you continue under his charge, you must obey him. We indeed sympathize with you in your distress, but we can lend you no assistance: for you lie beyond the pale of Catholic Communion. Your only resource is to return to "**THE ONE FOLD OF THE ONE SHEPHERD.**"

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